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**Decision Memorandum**  
***Dispersed Campsite***  
***Riparian Protection Project***



USDA Forest Service, Northern Region  
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests  
Palouse and North Fork Ranger Districts  
Latah and Clearwater counties, Idaho

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**I. Background**

The Palouse and North Fork District Rangers have decided to authorize the Disperse Campsite Riparian Protection project located in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Latah and Clearwater counties, Idaho (see attached maps). See list below for legal coordinates of sites:

**Palouse:**

- T42N, R4W, Section 21 (Waterhole);
- T42N, R2W, Section 14 (Cleveland Gulch);
- T41N, R2W, Section 8 (Little Sand/Bonami);
- T41N, R2W, Section 36 (Vassar Meadows area, 2 sites); and
- T40N, R2W, Section 2 (Little Boulder Creek)

**North Fork:**

- T41N, R8E, Section 34 (Skull Creek, 2 sites);
- T38N, R7E, Section 35 (Jazz Creek);
- T39N, R9E, Section 32 (Unnamed Site 2);
- T39N, R9E, Section 15 and 22 (Gillfillian);
- T39N, R10E, Section 5 and 6 (Unnamed Site 2); and
- T40N, R10E, Section 16 (Unnamed Sites 3 and 4)

**II. Purpose and Need**

The 14 dispersed campsites listed above (six on the Palouse RD; eight on the North Fork RD) are located in riparian areas that experience high levels of recreation use, including camping, fishing, hunting, boating and off-highway vehicle use. There are hundreds of dispersed sites along the North Fork of the Palouse, Vassar Meadows, Skull Creek, the North Fork of the Clearwater River that are used extensively from approximately April – November. While some sites pose no risk to riparian/aquatic resources, other sites are impacting water quality, damaging riparian vegetation, and degrading the recreation experience.

The purpose and need for this project is to install physical barriers, such as vegetation and boulders, in the general use area (or “footprint”) of 14 dispersed campsites to protect sensitive riparian resources and to promote riparian vegetation reestablishment.

## **Decision**

I have decided to approve the Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection project. The following actions will be implemented at campsites with the most serious problems:

- Through the use of a dump truck and a backhoe, a contractor will install boulders (approximately 3' x 4') or jack-leg fencing at strategic spots at each dispersed campsite and/or throughout the general use area or "footprint" of the site to delineate parking areas and camping locations and eliminate off-highway vehicle use within dispersed campsites. Depending on their size, some boulders may be embedded approximately 2 ft. – 3 ft. deep for stability and to ensure they will not be removed.
- Where practical, impacted sites/areas will be decompacted or scarified by breaking up the compacted soil to a minimum depth of 18 inches. The disturbed areas will then be replanted and/or reseeded to rehabilitate the sites/areas and to prevent further deterioration of riparian resources.
- Access to all sites will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Whether using boulders or fencing, an opening of between 36-40" will be provided at each location to ensure ease of access.
- Signage will be installed informing recreation visitors of the project's efforts with the goal of promoting a recreation use ethic towards responsible recreation use of the area.

Pending availability of stewardship funds, the project will be completed during the summer of 2018.

## ***Design Criteria and Mitigation Measures***

BMPs for Water Quality and Weed Management will be implemented during the project. The following Design Criteria are not all-inclusive, as Forest Plan standards are incorporated by reference:

1. Avoid or protect known historic properties or sites.
2. Halt ground-disturbing activities if cultural resources are discovered until an Archaeologist can properly evaluate and document the resources in compliance with 36 CFR 800.
3. Use Forest Service approved native plant species or non-native annual species to meet erosion control needs and other management objectives.
4. Follow regional plant and seed transfer guidelines.
5. Require contractors to use certified seed laboratories to test seed against the all state noxious weed list, and provide documentation of the seed inspection test to the contract administrator.
6. Apply only certified weed-free seed and mulch.
7. Certify that rock used for surfacing is free of noxious weed seed.
8. Remove all mud, soil, and plant parts from off road equipment before moving into project area to limit the spread of noxious weeds.
9. Conduct cleaning off National Forest lands.



***Design Criteria and Mitigation Measures***

10. Protect TES plant species and/or potential habitat identified at any point during planning or implementation as recommended by the unit botanist and approved by the appropriate line officer.
11. Restrict activities when soils are wet to prevent resource damage (indicators include excessive rutting, soil displacement, and erosion).

**III. Rationale for Decision and Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision**

**A. Category of Exclusion and Rationale for Using the Category**

Based on information in this document and the project record, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances affecting resource conditions exist (36 CFR 220.6), that this project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS, and that it meets all the criteria outlined for 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5): *Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.*

The rationale for my decision is based on: (1) the proposed action fully meeting the criteria for Categorical Exclusions, (2) the proposed action meeting the purpose and need, (3) the findings related to extraordinary circumstances, discussed below, (4) the project's consistency with laws and regulations, including the Forest Plan, and (5) my review of the project record.

**B. Finding of the Absence of Significant Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances**

Based on the findings for resource conditions described below, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with my decision. Forest Service direction at 36 CFR 220.6(b) describes the resource conditions that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstance related to the proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EIS or EA.

Additionally, 36 CFR 220.6(b) states, "*The mere presence of one of more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. It is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist.*"

**1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.**

The Interdisciplinary Team Wildlife Biologist, Fisheries Biologist and Botanist have determined the project would have no significant effects to federally listed and R1 Sensitive wildlife, fish and plant species and/or their habitats. The Wildlife biologist determined the recovery of riparian habitat would provide long-term benefits to R1 sensitive species, primarily amphibians and reptiles. The Botanist determined that, with protection of the riparian resource, suitable habitats in the project areas would recover, providing a net benefit to R1 sensitive species in the long term. Based on the above determinations, no extraordinary circumstances were identified for the project.



**2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.**

The Forest Hydrologist determined no direct, indirect or cumulative significant, adverse effects to floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds are expected for this project. Overall net benefits to watershed, soil and aquatic resources are expected with this project. Project activities would provide protection of riparian areas, streambanks and streams. The project is consistent with all applicable State and Federal water quality laws, and with soil and water standards in the Clearwater National Forest Plan, including the PACFISH amendment. Based on this analysis, no extraordinary circumstances were identified regarding floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds.

**3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas.**

The project area is not located in any congressionally designated area, and therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

**4. Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas.**

The project is not located within any Roadless Areas, Idaho Roadless Areas, or potential wilderness areas, and therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

**5. Research Natural Areas.**

The project area is not located in any research natural area, and therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to this resource.

**6. American Indians and Alaska native religious or cultural sites.**

An appropriate inventory has been conducted for the above project and cultural resources are known to be located within the area of potential effects. The Forest Cultural Resource Specialist has made a preliminary determination that the project will have no adverse effect to these properties because:

- The project has been designed to avoid effects to significant components/features associated with listed, eligible or unevaluated cultural resource sites (North Fork RD).
- The cultural resources are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Palouse RD).

Concurrence from the Idaho SHPO on the above determinations was received on November 27 and December 1, 2017 for the North Fork and Palouse Ranger Districts, respectively.

**7. Archaeological sites, or historical properties or areas.**

The Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, or the Forest Archaeologist via the use of the North Idaho Programmatic Agreement, has determined that no archaeological or historic property will be adversely affected by this project. Therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

**IV. Interested and Affected Agencies, Organizations, and Persons Contacted**

On December 17, 2015, letters providing information and seeking public comment were mailed to individuals, organizations, a variety of state and local agencies, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Additionally, project information was also available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/nezperce> under NEPA projects. Three individuals/organizations during the public comment period, and their comments are addressed in Appendix A. The original letters are available in the project record.



*Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection Project Decision Memo*


**V. Findings Required by Other Laws**

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project, I find that the Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection project is consistent with applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations, including the standards and guidelines contained in the 1987 Clearwater National Forest Plan, as amended, as required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

**VI. Contact Person**


Questions regarding this decision should be sent to Jeff Chynoweth, Small NEPA Team Coordinator, c/o Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs Supervisor's Office, 903 Third Street, Kamiah, Idaho 83536; 208-935-4260 or FAX 208-935-4275.

**VII. Signatures of Deciding Officer**

  
STEPHANIE SPENCER *Stephanie Spencer*  
Palouse District Ranger

1/19/2018

Date

  
ANDREW SKOWLUND  
North Fork District Ranger

1/19/18  
Date

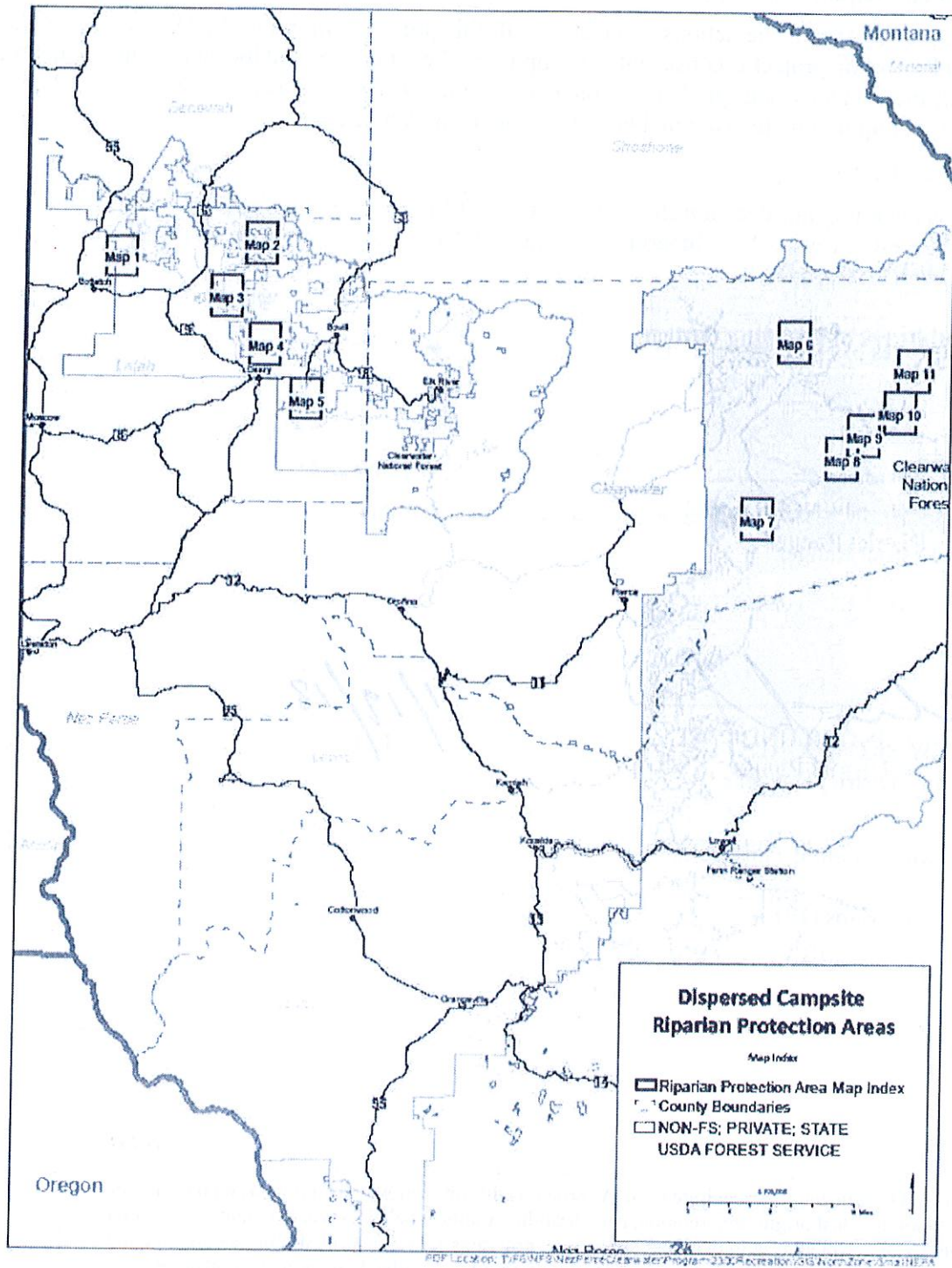
cc: Shawn Dieterich, Tim Lewis

Enclosures: Maps (12)

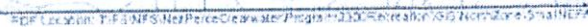
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**Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection Project Map Index**



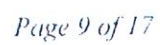
















## Dieterich, Shawn C -FS

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**From:** Chynoweth, James - FS  
**Sent:** Monday, December 04, 2017 10:32 AM  
**To:** Spencer, Stefani L -FS; Skowlund, Andrew M -FS  
**Cc:** Lewis, Tim -FS; Dieterich, Shawn C -FS  
**Subject:** Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection project  
**Attachments:** Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection DM\_12042017.docx

Morning.

It didn't register that we still needed the Palouse SHPO concurrence when we rec'd the North Fork concurrence and I sent out the DM for review/signature last week. Obviously y'all are on it. Anyway. We received the Palouse concurrence so I've edited the DM and this time the attached DM is ready for signature if there are no edits needed. Whoever signs last, please send me a pdf copy of the decision.

FYI - Who gets the original signed copy (Tim or Shawn?) is up to y'all but the other should also be sent a pdf copy of the DM for their records.

FYI2 - I didn't attach App A to this email since it hasn't changed.

Thanks.

Jeff



Jeff Chynoweth  
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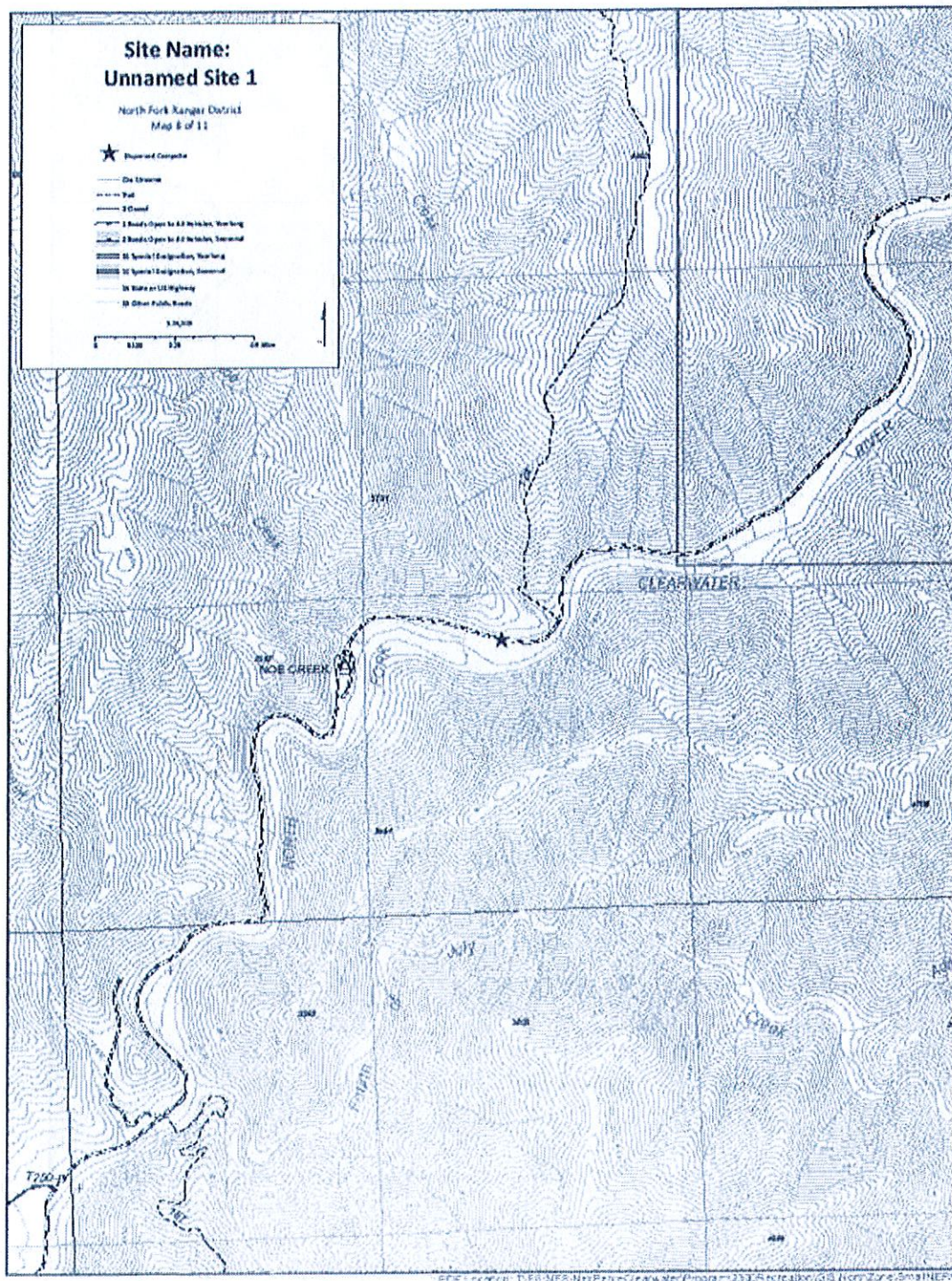


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**Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection Project Map 8**



PDF Location: T:\FS-NFS-NHP\Clearwater\Program\253\Restoration\GIS\DrawZone\Smst\NEPA



**Dispersed Campsite Riparian Protection Project Map 7**

